

Fahrenheit 451

theme essay sample



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The theme of a story helps give readers a deeper understanding of what the text is all about. Theme gives a moral to the story, or a lesson to be learned. In Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 the theme was happiness. Throughout the whole story the main character, Montag, is trying to see if he's really happy. When he discovers that he is not, he goes on a search to find out why. In the text it reads, " We need not be let alone. We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were really bothered? About something important, about something real?" (Bradbury 49). Here in this quote, Montag is speaking to his wife, Mildred. Montag is going on about books and how amazed he is by them. This makes Mildred very uncomfortable because books are seen as evil to the majority of the people, and she asks Montag to leave her alone. Now Montag responds by telling her that they need to be really bothered by something important and real sometimes; that it is important to feel these intense emotions. The world that Montag and Mildred live in delivers immediate happiness with instantaneous form of entertainment such as the television and radio.

This constant supply of ' enjoyment' suppresses real emotions in people, such as Mildred. Mildred is in so much emotional pain but she doesn't even really know it because she is constantly surrounding herself with her ' family' from her television programmes. Montag believes that to be happy one needs to be able to feel all different kinds of emotions, even the annoying kinds. Furthermore, to go along with emotions, Montag is still unsure about what is causing his unhappiness. However, he uses Faber to help him with find out. On page 78 it reads, " I don't know. We have everything we need to be happy, but we aren't happy. Something's missing. I looked around. The

only things I positively knew was gone was the books I'd burned in ten or twelve years.

So I thought books might help" (Bradbury). Now Montag has identified something that is causing his unhappiness. He notices that he has everything he needs to be happy, a wife, a house, a job, but he's still not. Montag also realises that the only thing missing were the books. Montag is already so much more advanced than the majority of the people living in his town because he knows that these books that they keep burning mean something. They contain the works of other people and it shows all the effort they put into it, Montag sees this and is baffled by it. Now Montag will make an effort in trying to read more and as much as he can. He believes, that with books he stole from work and Faber's help, he can understand why these books will bring him happiness.